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Key Senator Offers a Compromise on Contra Aid

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WASHINGTON, March 15 — The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said today that the Administration should provide money to the Nicaraguan insurgents, but withhold military aid if the Sandinistas agree to a series of internal changes.

Offering the Administration what amounted to a compromise in its uphill battle in Congress for a \$100 million aid request, the chairman, Senator Richard G. Lugar, said alternatives that would delay the financing in the hope of achieving negotiations would be counterproductive.

"Adding all kinds of strings and certifications will only hinder the effectiveness of the United States to act," the Indiana Republican said.

The support of Mr. Lugar was viewed by White House officials as critical in the Congressional vote scheduled for next week on Mr. Reagan's request. The President is seeking \$70 million in military aid and \$30 million in so-called humanitarian help.

In his weekly radio address today, Mr. Reagan said the Administration had repeatedly tried to achieve a negotiated solution with the Sandinistas, holding 10 high-level meetings in the last two years.

"Each time we left empty-handed," said the President, who is scheduled to make a nationally televised appeal for the aid Sunday night.

But in the Democratic response, Representative Thomas S. Foley of Washington warned that the Administration's policy toward Nicaragua ran the risk of involving American troops.

"The Administration proposes to expand this proxy war in Nicaragua, a proxy war fought with American money, American weapons and Nicaraguan lives, in which, at best, only a

bloody stalemate can be achieved," Mr. Foley said.

"I say at best only a stalemate," he said. "because as recently as this week official reports have concluded that it continues to be the consensus of the United States intelligence community that only U.S. forces could truly resolve the conflict in Nicaragua on a military basis."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent the \$100 million request to the Senate floor last week without a vote. An aide said Mr. Lugar's remarks, which were to be given to the National Federation of Young Republicans tonight, were intended to offer a "consensus" position between the policies of the Administration and the Congress.

In a text of the speech, Mr. Lugar said diplomatic pressure alone would

not change the Sandinistas. "The Sandinistas will drag their feet forever while they try to destroy the last vestiges of freedom in Nicaragua," he said.

He proposed that the United States tell the Sandinistas that it will provide military aid to the rebels, known as contras, "until and unless" Managua carries out a series of improvements.

The changes he listed are similar to those the Administration has been seeking: the removal of Cuban and Soviet military advisers; reduction of military forces; an end to support for rebels in El Salvador and other insurgencies; a cease-fire with the contras and free and fair elections.

"If the Sandinistas would agree to these reforms, the United States would withhold military aid to the United Nicaraguan Opposition" he said, refer-

ring to the group that has been in conflict with Managua.

Mr. Lugar said that the consensus on the committee was to support the contras and that regardless of the outcome of the votes next week "Nicaragua will not go away."

"The Sandinistas have no sympathy in Congress," he said.

Mr. Reagan, who on Friday paid a glowing tribute to the rebels, declaring at one point that he himself was a contra, said today that both the United States and other nations in the region had tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with the Sandinistas.

"By now, the truth about negotiating with the Nicaragua Communists must be abundantly clear," he said. "Yes, the Communists might meet their opponents at the table, but only when they fear meeting them in the field."